

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 08402 01 OF 04 181822Z
ACTION SS-25

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R 181630Z MAY 77
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AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
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AMEMBASSY SANA
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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 4 CAIRO 8402

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SA, US
SUBJECT: CONSULTATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE
HORN OF AFRICA.

SUMMARY: ON MAY 16 DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SEELYE
MET IN RIYADH WITH FONMIN PRINCE SAUD FOR LONG AND
DETAILED DISCUSSION OF THE SITUATION IN THE HORN OF
AFRICA. ON SOMALIA PRINCE SAUD SAID THAT HE FELT PRE-
SIDENT SIAD BARRE WAS SINCERE IN HIS DESIRE TO DISENGAGE
FROM THE SVOIETS. THE ONLY REASON FOR THIS IS RECENT
CLOSE SOVIET TIES WITH THE ETHIOPIANS ESPECIALLY IN PRO-
VIDING MILITARY ASSISTANCE. ASIDE FROM THAT SAID HAS
HAD NO QUARREL WITH THE RUSSIANS. HE MAY NOT BE A
CONVINCED MARXIST BUT HAS WHOLEHEARTEDLY EMBRACED THE
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 08402 01 OF 04 181822Z

COMMUNIST SYSTEM AS A MEANS OF GETTING AND HOLDING POWER.

THIS DOES NOT KEEP HIM FROM HAVING DIFFERENCES WITH THE
RUSSIANS. LONGSTANDING SOMALI FEAR OF ETHIOPIAN AGGRESSION
HAS BEEN INCREASED AND IS COUPLED WITH CONCERN THAT THE
SOVIETS MAY NOW HAVE EXCESSIVE POWER WITHIN THE SOMALI
MILITARY AND ADMINISTRATION. WHILE THE SAG IS CONVINCED

THAT SIAD WANTS TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE RUSSIANS, AN ALTERNATIVE SOURCE OF ARMS IS ESSENTIAL FOR THIS TO COME ABOUT. SAHE SOMALIA ARMED FORCES, AS NATIONALIST AS SIAD, WOULD WELCOME THE MOVE BUT THEIR SUPPORT WOULD QUICKLY WANE IF ARMS WERE NOT AVAILABLE FROM ANOTHER SOURCE. AMB SEELYE OUTLINED THE DIFFICULTIES WE WOULD FACE IN SEEKING TO DISPLACE THE RUSSIANS AND ASKED FOR SAUDI REACTION TO A POSSIBLE WESTERN CONSORTIUM OF ARMS SUPPLIERS. PRINCE SAUD SAID THAT THERE WOULD BE NO OBJECTION TO THIS BUT US INVOLVEMENT WOULD BE VITAL FOR PRACTICAL AND POLITICAL REASONS. AS TO WHO WOULD PAY FOR THE ARMS, PRINCE SAUDI SAID THAT SAUDI ARABIA WOULD BE PROVIDING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE WHICH WOULD MAKE SOMALI CASH PURCHASES POSSIBLE. HE ALSO THOUGHT THAT THERE SHOULD BE GRANT MILITARY AID FROM WESTERN SUPPLIERS AND THAT THE US SHOULD MAKE FMS CREDIT AVAILABLE. SAUD DID NOT SEE SOMALI IRREDENTISM AS A PROBLEM AS SOMALIA WAS NOT PREPARED TO USE FORCE EITHER AGAINST KENYA OR THE OGADEN (THOUGH THE SOMALIS WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT INDIGENOUS REBELS IN THE OGADEN). SOMALIA ACCEPTED DJIBOUTI INDEPENDENCE BECAUSE THEY LOST NOTHING BY IT. THE SOMALIS SEEMED TO THINK THAT DJIBOUTI WOULD ONE DAY JOIN SOMALIA BUT THIS WAS A LONG RANGE VIEW. THEY WERE NOT PREPARED TO DO ANYTHING TO BRING IT ABOUT. SAUD SAID THAT THE PRESENT ETHIOPIAN REGIME IS NOT FOLLOWING RATIONAL POLICIES. SAUDI ARABIANS ALWAYS FAVORED A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT FOR THE ERITREAN PROBLEM BASED UPON AUTONOMY WITHIN AN ETHIOPIAN UNION, RATHER THAN INDEPENDENCE. MXT ONE SECRET

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PAGE 03 CAIRO 08402 01 OF 04 181822Z

TIME AFTER THE FALL OF THE EMPEROR IT SEEMED THAT SUCH A SETTLEMENT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE. THE EPMG DELIBERATELY KILLED THESE HOPES BY THE PEASANT MARCH AND SUBSEQUENT POLICIES. NOW THE ERITREAN REBELS FEEL THAT THEY ARE IN GSCJOSOL AND ARE LESS INTERESTED IN NEGOTIATING. THE SAG HAS SOUGHT TO MONITOR ERITREAN DEMANDS BUT THEIR ARSC FALLS ON DEAF EARS AS LONG AS THE EPMG IS PURSUING ITS PRESENT BRUTAL POLICIES. THE SITUATION WILL REMAIN OUT OF CONTROL UNTIL THE EPMG RETURNS TO RATIONAL POLICIES. PRINCE SAUD UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE OF FURTHER US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE SUDAN, ESPECIALLY IN THE AREA OF AIR DEFENSE AS AT PRESENT SUDAN REMAINS EXPOSED TO ITS ENEMIES FROM THE AIR. HE SAID THAT THE SAG WOULD SOON BE RECEIVING A KENYAN DELEGATION TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE BUT THAT MILITARY LINKS BETWEEN KENYA AND ISRAEL WERE A HINDERANCE IN THIS REGARD. SAUD SAID THAT SAUDI ARABIA SUPPORTS DJIBOUTI'S INDEPENDENCE AND IS PREPARED TO ASSIST ECONOMICALLY. HE ASKED IF THE U.S. WAS ALSO. SEELYE SAID WE WERE. SAUD SAID THAT THE SAG

HAD RECEIVED NUMEROUS REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE FROM
DJIBOUTI LEADERS BUT WAS HAMPERED IN DECIDING WHAT
TO DO BY LACK OF KNOWLEDGE. HE ASKED THAT THE U.S.
CONSULT AND ADVISE ON THIS QUESTION. IT WAS AGREED THAT
THE QUESTION OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE NEEDED STUDY, IN
THE MEANTIME IT WAS A FRENCH RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP
DJIBOUTI AFLOAT UNTIL OTHER DONORS COULD SORT OUT HOW
THEY COULD BEST HELP. PRINCE SAUD GREATLY APPRECIATED
SEELYE'S COMING TO CONSULT ON THE HORN OF AFRICA AND
WISHED CLOSE CONSULTATION TO CONTINUE, ESPECIALLY CON-
CERNING THE NEXT STEPS IN SOMALIA. RJ UNDUD TOOK TO
RAISE WITH THE SOMALIS IN GENERAL TERMS THE QUESTION OF
ACCESS BY U.S. OFFICIALS TO SOMALI GOVERNMENT LEADERS
IN THE BELIEF THIS COULD HELP RESOLVE THE QUESTION OF
AMB LAUGHAM'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SAID. END SUMMARY

1. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SEELYE HAD A RELAXED AND
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 CAIRO 08402 01 OF 04 181822Z

THOROUGH TWO AND HALF HOUR DISCUSSION ON HORN OF AFRICA
WITH SAUDI PRINCE SAUD AL FAISAL IN RIYADH ON
MAY 16. SEELYE SAID U.S. IS PLEASED BY THE CONSTRUCTIVE
AND MORE ACTIVE POLICY SAUDI ARABIA NOW FOLLOWING
NOT ONLY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA BUT IN THE CONTINENT
GENERALLY. AT PRINCE SAUD'S REQUEST HE GAVE CAPABLE

COUNTRY BY COUNTRY REVIEW OF U.S. ANALYSIS OF SITUATION
ON THE HORN.

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 08402 02 OF 04 181811Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 4 CAIRO 8402

EXDIS

2. ETHIOPIA. THERE HAS RECENTLY BEEN A SHARP DETERIOR-
ATION IN OUR RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA. THE TURNING POINT
WAS PROBABLY THE EVENTS BRINGING MENGISTU TO POWER IN
FEBRUARY. THE EPMG RECENTLY CLOSED DOWN FIVE U.S.
INSTALLATIONS IN THE COUNTRY INCLUDING OUR MILITARY
ADVISORY GROUP. THE TIMING OF THIS MOVE MAY HAVE BEEN
INFLUENCED BY OUR OWN DECISION, COMMUNICATED TO THE EPMG
A COUPLE OF DAYS EARLIER, TO REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE MAAG
AND CLOSE OUR COMMUNICATIONS STATION AT ASMARA BUT IT
WAS PROBABLY AN ACTION ALREADY DECIDED. WE ESTIMATE THAT
THE EPMG WILL FACE A SITUATION OF CONTINUING DISSIDENCE
INCLUDING INCREASING WEAKENING OF CONTROL OVER A NUMBER
OF PROVINCES BUT THAT THERE IS NO SHORT TERM PROSPECT
OF THE REGIME BEING OVERTHROWN. WE HAVE FROZEN ALL
MILITARY DELIVERIES TO ETHIOPIA AND ARE REDUCING THE SIZE
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SECRET

PAGE 02 CAIRO 08402 02 OF 04 181811Z

OF OUR EMBASSY. WE WISH, NEVERTHELESS, TO MAINTAIN
A PRESENCE WHICH WOULD INCLUDE AN AID MISSION FOR THREE
REASONS: (A) TO BE ABLE TO MONITOR WHAT IS GOING ON
IN THE COUNTRY, (B) BECAUSE ADDIS IS THE SEAT OF OAU
HEADQUARTERS FROM WHICH WE DO NOT WISH TO BE CUT OFF,
AND (C) WE STILL HAVE A LOT OF FRIENDS THERE AND WE WOULD
LIKE TO MAINTAIN CONTINUITY FOR THE TIME WHEN BETTER
RELATIONS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE.

3. SUDAN AND KENYA. SEELYE SAID THAT BOTH COUNTRIES
HAVE MODERATE GOVERNMENTS WHICH ARE STABILIZING FACTOR
IN THE REGION. WE HAVE MOVED INTO A PERIOD OF IMPROVED
RELATIONS WITH THE SUDANESE GOVERNMENT AND ARE DOING WHAT
WE CAN TO STRENGTHEN SUDAN'S ABILITY TO RESIST AGGRESSION
AND SUBVERSION, PRIMARILY THROUGH ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE;
WE THINK SUDAN -- LIKE KENYA -- HAS GREAT AGRICULTURAL PO-
TENTIAL. WE ARE ALSO HELPING IN THE MILITARY AREA.
THE PRESIDENT HAS APPROVED THE SALE OF C-130'S AND WHEN
THIS SALE HAS BEEN FINALLY APPROVED WE WILL CONSIDER
THE POSSIBILITY OF OTHER MILITARY SALES IN LIGHT OF THE

ADMINISTRATION'S WORLD-WIDE ARMS POLICY REVIEW.

4. DJIBOUTI. WE ARE CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC THAT THERE WILL BE AN ORDERLY TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE. TO ENSURE THAT THIS INDEPENDENCE IS PRESERVED IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO SEE THAT THE NEW STATE IS VIABLE ECONOMICALLY. WE ARE PREPARED TO HELP.

5. SOMALIA. RE SOMALIA, SEELYE SAID THAT WE ARE SOMEWHAT PUZZLED BY RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. THE NEW CLOSE SOVIET-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONSHIP, PARTICULARLY IN THE ARMS AREA, HAS CERTAINLY MADE THE SOMALIS NERVOUS. NOW SEEMS LIKE A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO FACILITATE A DISENGAGEMENT FROM THE SOVIETS. BUT WE HAVE TWO QUESTIONS IN THIS REGARD ON WHICH WE WOULD LIKE SAUDI VIEWS. FIRST: HAS SAID BARRE REALLY DECIDED TO LOOSEN HIS TIES
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SECRET

PAGE 03 CAIRO 08402 02 OF 04 181811Z

WITH THE SOVIETS? OR IS THIS JUST A PLOY PERHAPS DESIGNED TO GET THE RUSSIANS TO GO SLOW WITH ETHIOPIA OR TO INDUCE THE RUSSIANS TO UP THE ANTE FOR BERBERA AND THEIR OTHER FACILITIES, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME GETTING SOMETHING OUT OF THE U.S. AND SAUDI ARABIA? WE DON'T THINK THIS IS THE CASE BUT THE QUESTION IS SUGGESTED BY PRESIDENT BARRE'S FAILURE TO SEE OUR AMBASSADOR BETWEEN THE TIME OF HIS RETURN TO SOMALIA FROM THE US AND HIS DEPARTURE TWO WEEKS LATER FOR A CONFERENCE.

IF BARRE WERE SERIOUS ABOUT IMPROVING US-SOMALI RELATIONS, HE WOULD PRESUMABLY SEE OUR AMBASSADOR. ALTERNATIVELY, IS IT POSSIBLE THAT SAID REALLY DOES WANT TO LOOSEN SOMALI DEPENDENCE ON THE SOVIETS, BUT HE FINDS DIFFICULTY IN DOING SO? MIGHT HE NOT BE INHIBITED BY THE SOVIETS AND THEIR SOMALI ASSOCIATES IN THE GOVERNMENT? DISENGAGEMENT FROM THE SOVIETS WILL IN ANY CASE BE A DELICATE AND DIFFICULT PROCESS, AND COULD JEOPARDIZE SIAD'S POSITION AS HEAD OF GOVERNMENT IF HE IS STRONGLY OPPOSED IN THIS POLICY.

6. SEELYE SAID THAT WHATEVER SIAD BARRE'S MOTIVES, WE ARE PREPARED TO BE RESPONSIVE. WE ARE READY TO ASSIST ECONOMICALLY AND AS THE FIRST STEP TO SEND OUT AN AID SURVEY TEAM. BUT BEFORE WE DO THIS, WE NEED SOME DIRECT EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FROM SIAD BARRE. WE KNOW THAT THE QUESTION OF ARMS SUPPLIES WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR THE SOMALIS. UNTIL WE ARE COMPLETED OUR OWN ARMS REVIEW IT ISN'T POSSIBLE TO SAY JUST WHAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO DO. IT IS CERTAINLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE US TO REPLACE THE SOVIETS AS THE SOLVE SOURCE OF ARMS. WE WILL BE WILLING TO ENCOURAGE NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES TO HELP IN THE WEAPONS FIELD AND IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE A KIND

OF WESTERN CONSORTIUM IN WHICH THE U.S. MIGHT PARTICIPATE.
WE RECONGIZE THAT U.S. PARTCIPATION COULD BE IMPORTANT
TO SAID FOR POLITICAL REASONS. CLEARLY WHATEVER WE DO
WILL NOT LIVE UP TO SIAD'S EXPECTATIONS. ALSO, WE DO NOT
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PAGE 04 CAIRO 08402 02 OF 04 181811Z

WANT THE SOMALIS TO GET MORE THAN DEFENSIVE ARMS OR TO
ENCOURAGE THE SOMALIS TO BELIEVE THEY CAN USE FORCE TO
RESOLVE THEIR IRRIDENTIST CLAIMS.

7. PRINCE SAUD RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT SAUDI ARABIA
VIEWS STABILITY IN AFRICA AS VITAL TO ITS OWN INTERESTS
AND TB NEW SOVIET AGGRESSIVENESS IN AFRICA IS VERY
DISTURBING. TURNING FIRST TO SOMALIA, PRINCE SAUDI SAID
THAT SAUDI RELATIONS WITH THAT COUNTRY HAVE NOT BEEN GOOD
FOR THREE OR FOUR YEARS AND HAVE WORSENERD AS SOVIET
INVOLVEMENT HAS GROWN. SAUDI ARABIA NOW BELIEVES THAT
SOMALIA IS REVIEWING ITS POLICIES. THE MILITARY ELEMENT
IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN THIS REVIEW, GIVEN SIAD'S
OWN BASE OF POWER IN THE MILITARY. THERE WAS BASICALLY
NO QUARREL BETWEEN THE SOVIETS AND THE SOMALIS UNTIL THE
RUSSIANS BEGAN GIVING MAJOR SUPPORT TO THE ETHIOPIANS,
PARTICULARLY IN THE MILITARY AREA. THE SOMALIS THEN BECAME
CAUGHT IN A CONFLICT BETWEEN IDEOLOGY AND NATIONALISM.
THE SOMALIS HAVE NEVER INTENDED TO ATTACK ETHIOPIA
BUT THEY HAVE CONSTANTLY FEARED ETHIOPIAN AGGRESSION.
SIAD BARRE IS NOW EVEN MORE CONCERNED AND PERCEIVES A
DUAL THREAT: ONE FROM A SOVIET-BACKED ETHIOPIA AND THE
OTHER FROM SOVIET INFLUENCE IN HIS OWN ARMED FORCES AND
ADMINISTRATION.

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 08402 03 OF 04 181834Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 3 OF 4 CAIRO 8402

EXDIS

8. PRINCE SAUD SAID THAT WHEN HE TALKZZ WITH SIAD BARRE IN APRIL SIAD HAD GONE TO SOME LENGTH TO JUSTIFY HIS RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS AND INSIST ON HIS OWN INDEPENDENCE. AT THE SAME TIME HE GAVE CLEAR INDICATION THAT SOMALIA IS LOOKING FOR ALTERNATIVES. VICE PRESIDENT SAMANTAR IS PRO-SOVIET BECAUSE HE HAS NO OTHER POWER BASE AND THE SOVIETS ARE STRONG IN THE MILITARY. SIAD'S BROTHER-IN-LAW BAND HEAD OF SECURITY, AHMED SULAIMAN, SEEMS TO BE GAINING IN STRENGTH AND FAVORS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE SOVIETS. HE TOLD PRINCE SAUD THAT SEEN IN THE ARMY WHERE THE RUSSIANS HAVE SUCH STRENGTH THERE IS WIDESPREAD RESENTMENT BECAUSE OF THEIR CONTROL OVER OFFICER CAREERS. MOST OF THE POPULATION IS OPPOSED TO SIAD AND THE COMMUNISTS AND SIAD SEEMS NOW TO BE TRYING TO FORGE A FRONT INCLUDING NON-COMMUNISTS ELEMENTS. HE RECENTLY REHABILITATED
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 08402 03 OF 04 181834Z

A FORMER MODERATE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND HAS BROUGHT BACK OMAR ARTEH. PERHAPS HE ONLY DID THIS IN ORDER TO

HAVE SOMEONE WHO COULD TALK MORE EASILY WITH THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT. BUT EVEN IF THIS IS THE CASE, IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT HE FELT THE NEED TO DO SO.

9. AS TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER SIAD BARRE IS A CONVINCED IDEOLOGICAL MARXIST COMMUNIST, PRINCE SAUD SAID PROBABLY NOT. BUT THIS ISN'T VERY RELEVANT SINCE HE HAS UNQUESTIONABLY ADOPTED A SYSTEM BASED ON COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY AS A MEANS OF RULING AND HOLDING ON TO POWER. THE FACT THAT HE HAS WHOLEHEATEDLY EMBRACED A COMMUNIST SYSTEM DOESN'T MEAN THAT HE NEED SEE EYE TO EYE WITH THE RUSSIANS; LOOK AT THE TURKIS AND CHINESE. THE IMPORTANT THING NOW FOR SAUDI ARABIA, THE U.S. AND THE WEST IS TO CAPITALIZE ON SIAD'S DUAL FEARS CREATED BY SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN ETHIOPIA AND THE SUSPICION THAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT NOT GET OUT IF HE ORDERED THEM TO. SIAD KNOWS THAT

(A) MENGISTU IS MUCH MORE COMMITTED TO THE RUSSIANS THAN HE IS AND (B) THAT ETHIOPIA IS A MUCH MORE IMPORTANT COUNTRY FOR THE RUSSIANS BY VIRTUE OF ITS CENTRAL AND STRATEGIC LOCATION AND LARGE POPULATION.

10. PRINCE SAUDI SAID THAT THE ETHIOPIAN ELEMENT IS ALL THAT MAKES A CHANGE OF SOMALI POLICY POSSIBLE AND THE KEY TO THIS IS THE QUESTION OF MILITARY SUPPLY. UNLESS SIAD IS ASSURED IN THIS REGARD HE WON'T BE MLE TO MOVE. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THE U.S. BE WILLING TO HELP. SAUDI ARABIA CAN HELP ECONOMICALLY, BUT DOESN'T HAVE THE ARMS TO GIVE. IT WON'T WORK FOR US TO SAY "GET THE RUSSIANS OUT AND WE WILL SEE WHAT WE CAN DO". SIAD MUST FIRST HAVE SOMETHING IN HAND. SEELYE SAID THAT THE U.S. ACCEPTED THAT THE ACTUAL DEPARTURE OF THE RUSSIANS WOULD NOT BE IMMEDIATE, AND IT WOULD HAVE TO BE APPROACHED CAUTIOUSLY. HOWEVER, ULTIMATELY WE WOULD
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PAGE 03 CAIRO 08402 03 OF 04 181834Z

EXPECT AS A QUID PRO QUO FOR WESTERN MILITARY ASSISTANCE THE EVICTION OF THE SOVIETS FROM BERBERA.

11. TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF SOMALI IRRIDENTISM, PRINCE SAUD SAID HE DID NOT THINK THE SOMALIS WERE LIKELY TO ATTACK THE OGADEN, THOUGH THEY HAD BEEN AND WOULD CONTINUE TO GIVE SUPPORT TO INDIGENOUS REBBDS. SOMALIA HAS A STRANGE RELATIONSHIP WITH OGADEN, NOT TREATING IT AS A FULLY INTEGRAL PART OF SOMALIA AND AT TIMES IN THE PAST HAVING EXPLOITED IT. SINGULARLY, SOMALIS IS UNLIKELY EVER TO USE FORCE TO OBTAIN CONTROL OF SOMALIA TERRITORY IN KENYA, FIRST BECAUSE THEY DON'T WANT TO ANTAGONIZE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AND WORLD OPINION, AND SECONDLY BECAUSE THEY KNOW THAT THEY HAVE NO SUPPORT IN THE REGION. JRRFOR DJIBOUTI THEY THINK THAT EVENTUALLY IT WILL JOIN THEM. BUT THEY WILL NOT TAKE ANY ACTION TO BRING THIS ABOUT AMONG OTHER REASONS BECAUSE THEY DON'T WANT TO FIGHT ETHIOPIA BACKED BY THE SOVIETS. THEY ARE PREPARED TO SEE DJIBOUTI JOIN THE ARAB LEAGUE AND THE OAU. THEY DON'T LOSE ANYTHING BY DJIBOUTI INDEPENDENCE EVEN OVER THE LONG TERM.

12. SEELYE NOTED THAT PRINCE SAUD HAD ADDRESSED THE QUESTION OF SIAD BARRE'S SINCERITY IN DESIRING TO DISTANCE HIMSELF FROM THE RUSSIANS. THE QUESTION THEN ARISES, HOW FAR AND FAST CAN HE GO WITHOUT DEGRADING HIS MILITARY CAPABILITY. PRINCE SAUD REPLIED THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE THE DISTINCTION THAT SIAD IS NOT A PRISONER OF THE RUSSIANS. BECAUSE OF SOVIET SUPPORT FOR MENGISTU A MOVE AWAY FROM THE RUSSIANS WOULD BE POPULAR IN THE ARMY WHERE NATIONALISM IS STRONG. ADMITTEDLY THIS MIGHT NOT

BE THE CASE WITH THE AIR FORCE WHERE THE RUSSIANS ARE PARTICULARLY WELL LOCATED. ON THE WHOLE THE PROBLEM IS NOT GETTING THE SUPPORT OF HIS MILITARY BUT OF SUSTAINING IT. IF THERE WERE NO ALTERNATIVE TO THE RUSSIANS AS ARMS SUPPLIERS, HIS SUPPORT WOULD DISSIPATE QUICKLY.

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PAGE 04 CAIRO 08402 03 OF 04 181834Z

13. SEELYE ASKED PRINCE SAUD HOW HE WOULD VIEW A CON-SORTIUM OF WESTERN ARMS SUPPLIERS TO SOMALIA, INCLUDING PERHAPS FRANCE AND THE UK. PRINCE SAUDI REPLIED THAT HE WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THIS BUT U.S. INVOLVEMENT WOULD BE IMPORTANT FOR POLITICAL REASONS. SEELYE INQUIRED WHETHER SAUDI ARABIA WOULD BE WILLING TO FINANCE SOMALI ARMS PURCHASES. PRINCE SAUD SAID THAT IT IS NOT NORMAL SAUDI PRACTICE TO PAY DIRECTLY FOR FOREIGN ARMS PURCHASES THOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN EXCEPTIONS. SAUDI ARABIA WILL BE PROVIDING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA WHICH SHOULD FREE MONEY THE SOMALIS COULD USE FOR MAKING CASH PURCHASES. SEELYE ASKED WHETHER THIS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE COULD BE ENOUGH TO COVER THE WEAPONS PURCHASES. PRINCE SAUD SAID THAT SAUDI ASSISTANCE WOULD PAY FOR SOME BUT THAT SOME ARMS SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO THE SOMALIS BY WESTERN NATIONS ON A GRANT OR CREDIT BASIS. THE U.S, HE SAID, SHOULD MAKE FMS CREDITS AVAILABLE SINCE SOMALIA IS SUCH A POOR COUNTRY. THIS COULD ALSO BE PSYCHOLOGICALLY IMPORTANT. SEELYE SAID THAT FMS CREDITS FOR SOMALIA MIGHT BE VERY DIFFICULT AND THAT EVEN APPROVAL FOR THE CASH SALE OF WEAPONS WILL NOT BE A SIMPLE MATTER.

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 08402 04 OF 04 190534Z
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AMEMBASSY SANA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T SECTION 4 OF 4 CAIRO 8402

EXDIS

14. PRINCE SAUD THEN REVERTED TO THE QUESTION OF U.S. ARMS FOR THE SUDAN. HE SAID HE WAS PLEASED THAT WE HAD DECIDED TO SELL THE C-130'S BUT HOPED WE WOULD BE DOING MORE, PARTICULARLY IN THE AIR DEFENSE FIELD. HE SAID THAT THE SUDAN NEEDS F-5'S AND ASSOCIATED GROUND RADARS, ETC. BECUASE AT PRESENT THE COUNTRY STANDS COMPLETELY EXPOSED TO ITS ENEMIES FROM THE AIR. SEELYE REITERATED THAT WE WILL BE EXAMINING THIS QUESTION ONCE WE HAVE THE SALE OF THE C-130'S HAS BEEN FULLY APPROVED. WHAT WE DO FOR THE SUDAN WILL DEPEND UPON THE RESULTS OF OUR OVERALL ARMS SALES REVIEW. FUNDAMENTALLY, WE RECOGNIZE THE LEGITIMATE NEED OF FRIENDLY, MODERATE GOVERNMENTS TO ACQUIRE WEAPONS TO MEET THEIR DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS.

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PAGE 02 CAIRO 08402 04 OF 04 190534Z

15. TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF ERITREA, SEELYE SAID THAT WHILE WE HAVE GENERALLY SUPOORTED THE PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE MANNER IN WHICH ERITREA BECAME PART OF ETHIOPIA RAISES QUESTIONS AS TO HOW FIRMLY THIS POLICY SHOULD APPLY HERE. IN ANY CASE, WE SUPPORT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT AND FEAR THAT, IN VIEW OF VERY STRONG ETHIOPIAN FEELINGS IN REGARD TO ERITREA, INDEPENDENCE FOR THE PROVINCE COULD TURN OUT TO BE PERMANENTLY DESTABILIZING. WHAT, HE ASKED, IS SAUDI ARABIA'S POSITION? PRINCE SAUD REPLIED THAT SAUDI ARABIA WANTS STABILITY IN THE AREA AND HAS MAINTAINED THAT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WOULD BE BEST. AFTER THE OVERTHROW OF THE EMPEROR AND BEFORE THE RECENT SERIES OF PURGES SAUDI ARABIA HAD RECEIVED AN ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT DELEGATION AND INFORMED THEM THAT SAUDI ARABIA BELIEVED THAT BECUASE ERITREA WAS ANNEXED THAT IT FELL OUTSIDE THE OAU RESOLUTION ON TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. THE SAUDIS HAD SAID THAT THEY WERE GIVING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE ERITREANS AND SUPPORT THEIR DESIRE

FOR AN IDENTITY. THEY HAD ALSO SAID THAT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT BASED ON AUTONOMY WITHIN AN ETHIOPIAN UNION WOULD BE WELCOME. AT THIS TIME THE SAUDIS THROUGHT THE CHANCES FOR A SETTLEMENT WERE EXCELLENT. THE ETHIOPIANS THEN PROCEEDED TO KILL PROSPECTS FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN A MANNER WHICH LEFT NO DOUBT THEY WERE DOING SO DELIBERATELY. NOW THAT THE ERITREANS FEEL THAT THE MILITARY SITUATION HAS CHANGED AND THAT THEY ARE IN CHARGE, THEY ARE LESS LIKELY TO ACCEPT A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION. PRINCE SAUD SAID THAT THE SAG HAD TOLD THE ERITREANS THAT THEY SHOULD MODERATE THEIR DEMANDS BUT IN THE FACE OF ETHIOPIAN INTRANSIGENCE THIS HAS NO EFFECT. THE SITUATION NOW IS NOT IN ANYONE'S HANDS BUT THE ETHIOPIANS. SAUDI ARABIA STILL BELIEVES THAT THE BEST SOLUTION WOULD BE A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT ECOMPANSSING ERITREA WITHIN AN ETHIOPIAN STATE, BUT THE ETHIOPIAN REGIME IS NOT FOLLOWING A RATIONAL POLICY. UNTIL THEY DO THE SITUATION WILL
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PAGE 03 CAIRO 08402 04 OF 04 190534Z

REMAIN OUT OF CONTROL.

16. THE CONVERSATION THEN TURNED BRIEFLY TO KENYA. SEELYE SAID THAT THE U.S. HAD RECENTLY DECIDED TO EARMARK SOME FUNDS SPECIFICALLY FOR DEVELOPEMENT OF THE LARGELY SOMALI-MUSLIM INHABITED NORTHEAST CORNER OF SOMALIA. HE INQUIRED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SAUDI AID TO KENYA AND URGED THAT THE SAUDIS GIVE ASSISTANCE. PRINCE SAUD SAID THAT THE MATTER WAS UNDER DISCUSSION AND THAT A KENYAN DELEGATION WOULD BE COMING TO THE KINGDOM SHORTLY TO DISCUSS THIS WITH THE SAUDI FUND FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. HE SAID THAT KENYAN MILITARY (HE UNDERLINED MILITARY) RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL WERE A HINDERANCE IN THIS REGARD.

17. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING PRINCE SAUD SAID THAT HE LOOKED FORWARD TO CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS ON AFRICAN MATTERS, PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS SOMALIA AND ON THE QUESTION OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO DJIBOUTI. DJIBOUTI LEADERS HAD MADE A NUMBER OF REQUESTS INCLUDING SAUDI COVER FOR THEIR CURRENCY. THE SAUDIS WERE AT A LOSS TO KNOW HOW TO PROCEED SINCE THEY DIDN'T HAVE MUCH KNOWLEDGE OF DJIBOUTI'S CONDITIONS OR REAL NEEDS. THEY WOULD APPRECIATE US ADVICE. PRINCE SAUD AND SEELYE AGREED THAT IT WAS A FRENCH RESPONSIBILITY TO SEE THAT INDEPENDENT DJIBOUTI WAS LAUNCHED WITH ENOUGH ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO SURVIVE OVER THE SHORT TERM AND THAT IN THE MEANTIME OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES SUCH AS SAUDI ARABIA AND THE U.S. WOULD STUDY THE SITUATION TO DETERMINE HOW BEST THEY COULD HELP.

18. PRINCE SAUD ALSO SAID THAT HE WOULD RAISE DIRECTLY
WITH THE SOMALIS THE QUESTION OF ACCESS BY U.S. OFFICIALS
TO SOMALI LEADERS. HE WOULD NOT REFER SPECIFICALLY TO
AMB LOUGHRAN'S DIFFICULTIES IN GETTING TO SEE PRESIDENT SIAD
BARRE BUT BELIEVED THAT THIS APPROACH MIGHT HELP

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PAGE 04 CAIRO 08402 04 OF 04 190534Z

RESOLVE THAT PROBLEM.
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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009